



*Inspiring all learners to  
achieve excellence*

**Barrington Community  
Unit School District 220**

**BARRINGTON HIGH SCHOOL**

**BARRINGTON MIDDLE SCHOOLS**

Prairie Campus

Station Campus

**ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

Countryside

Grove Avenue

Hough Street

Arnett C. Lines

North Barrington

Barbara B. Rose

Roslyn Road

Sunny Hill

Woodland

Dr. Tom Leonard  
*Superintendent of Schools*

Administrative Center

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November 12, 2007

Ms. Victoria J. Rutson  
Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis  
Surface Transportation Board  
395 E Street, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Dear Ms. Rutson:

I am currently Superintendent at Barrington Community Unit School District 220 in the Barrington, Illinois area. In my capacity as Superintendent over the past five months, I oversee a staff of approximately 1,100 employees that includes teachers, administrators, clerical, and maintenance personnel. It is our mission to provide for the education of over 9,200 students. School District 220 serves a vital purpose in the community by providing an education to children who come from a geographical area of approximately 72 square miles. One of our significant concerns is that currently in transporting our students some, unfortunately, need to be on school buses for close to one hour each way every day in order to get to our schools. This is due primarily to the traffic that has increased in the suburban area, as well as the overall size of our school district.

It has come to my attention that Canadian National Railway Company seeks to acquire the Elgin, Joliet, & Eastern Railway Co, which operates a rail line that runs through the Barrington area. I write to urge the Surface Transportation Board to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for this transaction. The transaction will have a significant impact on our ability to get our students from their homes to our facilities. Not only will it impact students that travel on buses, but it will impact parents who drive their children to school as well as students who walk to our high school, which alone holds over 3,000 students. Only the rigorous review required by the EIS process will develop alternatives and mitigation procedures sufficient to limit that impact. This review should include impacts of the transaction further into the future than the three years Canadian National currently estimates.

Specifically, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that our school buses currently cross the EJ&E railroad lines more than 376 times per day. Over 60% of our school buses need to cross the EJ& E lines several times per day. Our fear is that our already difficult bus travel times for our children will become intolerable and that this change will cause a significant impact in our ability to fulfill our mission. In addition, as referenced above, we have a high school of approximately 3,000 students very close to the EJ&E lines. The vast majority of our children who walk to the high school will cross the EJ&E rail lines twice each day. Our concerns are not only for the efficient operation of a school district, but it is also for the safety of our children.

Ms. Victoria J. Rutson

November 12, 2007

Page 2

If the Board does not require an EIS, we will not have the information necessary to prevent a severe degradation in the local environment. Moreover, the EIS should look further into the future than the three years for which CN has estimated traffic increases; such a shortsighted view does not take into account major changes expected in our region for future generations. The SEA should immediately begin developing a scope of study for a draft EIS that emphasizes the traffic impact that this change will cause for the entire Barrington area, particularly its impact on transporting students to and from our schools. In addition, we hope that you will look closely at the safety at grade crossings as we want to make sure that all children can safely reach our schools, either by bus, car, or on foot. I look forward to further correspondence with SEA and the Board on the EIS process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Leonard", with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Dr. Tom Leonard  
Superintendent of Schools